



December 15, 2010

Joe Yun  
Department of Water Resources  
Division of Planning and Local Assistance  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: Comments on the Draft Recommendations for Planning Grant Awards, Proposition 84  
Integrated Regional Water Management Program

Dear Mr. Yun,

On behalf of the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, we would like to submit the following comments for your consideration regarding the draft recommendations for planning grants for the Proposition 84 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program.

The Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners has been working in the Tulare/Kern IRWM Funding Area for several years in an attempt to truly integrate the planning efforts of all the IRWM groups working in our region and to ensure that the habitat needs of our local environment are considered, protected and preserved where appropriate. To date, we have been very successful in getting a number of groups to coordinate efforts including the Kaweah Basin, Tule River, Upper Kings, Poso Creek, Kern County and Southern Sierra IRWM groups. These IRWM groups are working together to tackle the water and natural resources issues in our region in ways that are thoughtful and coordinated to the true benefit of the region and the people within it.

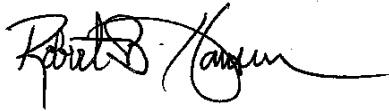
Unfortunately, as a result of the recent recommendations for the first round of Proposition 84 planning grants, our region could lose a tremendous amount of momentum. Only one planning proposal grant received an award recommendation within the Tulare/Kern Funding Area. On the whole, this does not bode well for planning efforts that are needed in our region, especially for those areas that are recently formed and less than adequately funded for start up.

As you know, the Tulare/Kern region is a predominately low-income rural part of the state and thus has limited financial resources. Many of our IRWM groups have also focused on the early steps of organizing stakeholders to the exclusion of reserving funding for preparing polished grant applications. While this approach and priorities may have contributed to scoring poorly on this initial planning grant application, we believe that these planning efforts have real merit and need to continue to move forward. In particular, we would encourage DWR to reconsider Southern Sierra IRWMP planning grant application for some level of funding. This plan will cover the upper watersheds of the Tulare/Kern region, an area that is not yet covered by an approved IRWMP and an area not likely to ever get covered by an IRWMP unless some level of continued planning funding is made available.

We respectfully request that DWR reconsider funding the planning efforts in the Tulare/Kern Region. If full funding is not possible, we would like to know what the options are for partial or bridge funding to help IRWM groups like the Southern Sierra IRWMP continue to move forward with their planning efforts.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Hansen", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert B. Hansen  
President

cc: Mr. Mark Cowin, DWR  
Ms. Tracie Billington, DWR  
Ms. Leslie-Friedman Johnson, Conservation Strategy Group

***Contact: Carole K. Combs, Secretary of the Board, Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, P.O. Box 1180, Three Rivers, CA 93271, phone 559/799-7204, fax 559/561-1921, ccombs@thegrid.net.  
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